

GRAND ISLAND HEARING AID CENTER, INC.

"Technologically Advanced Hearing Care At Prices To Fit All Budgets"

721 W. 7th (Corner of 7th and Eddy) • Grand Island, NE 68801 • (308) 382-9169
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Satellite Locations — Aurora • Ord • Broken Bow

Roxann T. Ellison, *BC - HIS

Hearing Instrument Specialist
Certified by the NE Dept. of Health • Lic. # 440 and the
National *Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences

Alan L. Ellison, *BC - HIS

Hearing Instrument Specialist
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National *Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences

Honorable Donna E. Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W. Room 615F
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Donna E. Shalala:

I am deeply concerned that the government may put me out of business and I am writing to ask for your assistance.

I am a hearing instrument specialist and operate a small business in Grand Island, Nebraska serving over 3,000 hearing-impaired Americans. The Food and Drug Administration is now, after seven years of inaction, rushing to publish a proposed rule to revise the way hearing aids are sold in this country. The FDA is reportedly planning to allow the states to pick and choose which tests must be required before a hearing aid can be purchased and which hearing and health providers are qualified to conduct such tests.

Presently, hearing instrument specialists, physicians, and audiologists are essential and fully qualified entry points into the hearing health care system. If the FDA defers to the states, audiologists have indicated that they would endeavor to position themselves as the sole entry point into hearing and health care. Such gatekeeper status could be achieved by lobbying states to require expensive hearing tests that only audiologists provide. This would not only force hearing instrument specialists such as myself out of business, but it would greatly increase costs and impede access to hearing health care services for the nation's hearing impaired.

Hearing impairment is a major health care concern. Only approximately 20% of the 28 million hearing-impaired Americans who could benefit from a hearing aid actually use one. The proposed rule that the FDA is advocating would impede access to needed hearing health care services for millions of Americans. Please don't let this happen.

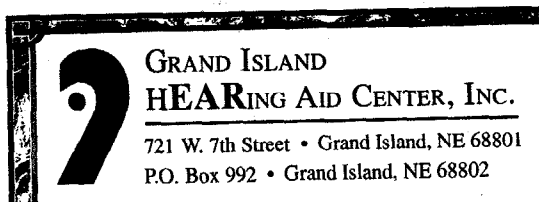
On behalf of the thousands of hearing-impaired Americans in Central Nebraska that I and my co-workers serve, I ask that you contact Secretary of Health Shalala and urge that the FDA hearing aid rule be stopped.

Please keep me informed of your efforts.

Respectfully,
Roxann T. Ellison, BC-HIS
Board Certified in Hearing Instrument Sciences
Past President, Nebraska Hearing Society
Owner, Grand Island Hearing Aid Center, Inc.

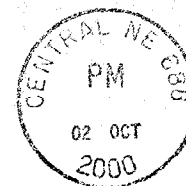
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